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House of Representatives **JUNE 13 HEARING ON FILIPINO WORLD WAR II VETERANS' BENEFITS** **HON. BOB FILNER** **OF CALIFORNIA** **IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

MR. FILNER: Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the Members of this House that on Thursday, June 13, at 3 p.m. in the afternoon, there will be a hearing before the Subcommittee on Health of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, conducted by the honorable gentleman from Kansas (Mr. Moran), who happens to be in the room tonight, who is the chairman of that subcommittee, on the issue of health care for Filipino World War II veterans within the Department of Veterans Affairs.

This is not a normal hearing, Mr. Speaker, but it is the culmination of almost 60 years, 60 years, of a struggle for justice and honor. During World War II, the brave Filipino soldiers were drafted into our Armed Forces by President Franklin Roosevelt. After being called into service, the soldiers served side by side with forces from the United States mainland, exhibited great courage at the epic battles of Bataan and Corregidor, and were instrumental in contributing to the successful outcome of the war. They held up the Japanese advance far beyond their calendar so we were able to prepare and harass the Japanese with guerrilla warfare during the whole time of the Japanese occupation. And what did we do after we won the war in the Pacific and in Europe? We unceremoniously deprived these soldiers of the veterans' benefits due them by the Congressional Rescissions Act passed in 1946.

Whereas there was almost a quarter of a million soldiers involved in that war from the Philippines, today there are only 60,000 who are still alive. Their last wish, Mr. Speaker, is to have the honor and dignity of being recognized by the United States as a veteran of World War II.

At this hearing on Thursday, June 13, literally a living American history will be presented to the American public. We will have testimony, both oral and written, from Filipino World War II veterans, some of whom are survivors of the infamous Death March of Bataan. We will hear testimony from Filipino veterans' organizations and from veterans' service organizations, like the American Legion, the Vietnam Veterans of America, and the Disabled American Veterans. The ambassador from the Philippines, the Honorable Albert Del Rosario, will be a witness, as will several Members of Congress from both sides of the aisle.

A special guest witness will be Lou Diamond Phillips, born in the Philippines, and an international star, with roles in movies, television and theater. Phillips is most well-known for his role in "La Bamba," for which he received great critical acclaim. He has also starred in "Stand and Deliver," "Young Guns," and "Courage Under Fire." We welcome him and all the others who will be testifying to the need to provide Filipino World War II veterans with the recognition that is their due.

Mr. Speaker, let us recognize the bravery and gallantry of Filipino veterans. Let us give them equity, because their bravery helped us win World War II.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman of the Subcommittee on Health of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. Moran), for having this hearing, and I invite all the Members of this House to attend the historic June 13 meeting

